

# Historic Preservation Design Review

March 25, 2010

## HP-10-06, 118 S. Main St. (City)

### I. THE REQUEST

**Applicant:** Mary Lewis (Secrets of Sumter)

**Status of the Applicant:** Property Owner representative

**Request:** Design Review for façade awning, sign, renovations and restoration on building front and rear

**Location:** 118 S. Main St.

**Present Use/Zoning:** Commercial/CBD (Central Business District)

**Tax Map Reference:** 228-13-08-005

**Adjacent Property Land Use and Zoning:** North – Commercial/CBD  
South – Commercial/CBD  
East – Commercial/CBD  
West – Commercial/CBD

### II. BACKGROUND

The applicant is requesting design review approval for façade elements including an awning and signage to a commercial building that fronts on N. Main St. across from the new CCTC Nursing Education Building.

#### Architectural/Historic Context

Based on available records from the South Carolina Department of Archives and History and the Sumter City-County Planning Department, the structure under review is within the Historic Downtown but is not part of the National Register Historic District.

118 S Main St. was constructed circa 1900 and underwent major changes including a complete façade change in 1965 according to the Sumter County Tax records.

The structure is of brick, 2-stories tall and has a rectangular floor plan. The street level façade is not original, and the present two-story Palladian windows, awnings and signage are not sympathetic. The building is considered to be an intrusion into the district because of the mid-twentieth century façade changes. The rear façade has had new windows and a metal and glass ground-level entry door installed in the recent past. On the rear façade it is very plain, a flat brick veneer painted pale yellow with rectangular inset brickwork along the header for the second story with four mullioned upper floor windows of dark painted metal, that have been placed in the

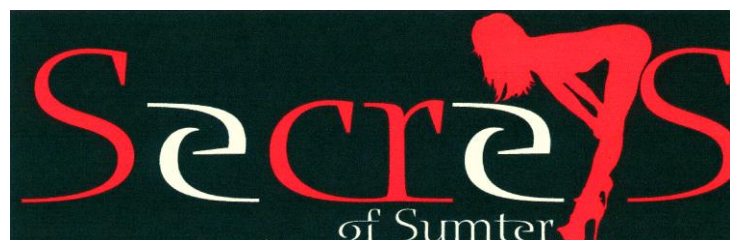
original early 20<sup>th</sup> century arched brick frames. This structure is of no particular style; whatever architectural significance it had has been lost over time due to unsympathetic renovations.



**Scope of Proposed Work:**

The building presently is occupied by a private club, and is before the board in order to have the proposed elements reviewed post-installation.

The applicant has installed a black, box-style awning with a zig-zag scalloped edge bordered by red tape. The signage has been installed on the windows, the rear entrance, and on the front face of the awning above the entrance door.



The signage is a serif font with the business icon incorporated into the lettering. It is red and white on a black ground.

The *Design Review Guidelines Manual* states:

**#12) AWNINGS OR CANOPIES ARE APPROPRIATE FOR STOREFRONTS**

**Normally Required**

- a. Original canopies or awnings of wood and metal construction should be retained and preserved.
- b. Metal awnings in the downtown areas should not be installed

**Recommended**

- c. The installation of retractable canvas awnings at the appropriate storefront locations is recommended.
- d. Canvas, vinyl-coated canvas, and acrylic are the most appropriate materials for pre-1940 commercial buildings.
- e. Awnings should cover only the storefront display windows or transom. Upper façade details should not be obscured.

There was no awning installed over the entrance door previously. The awning that has been installed is not of an historic style, nor is it compatible with the historic character of the downtown. It is a modern awning. The building itself has been significantly altered; however, the modern Palladian-style architecture of the present façade conflicts with the modern box-style awning. A more rounded canopy style would be more appropriate and would echo the Palladian elements.

**#19) SIGN COLORS SHOULD COMPLEMENT OVERALL BUILDING COLORS**

**Recommended**

- a. No more than two or three colors should be used per sign.
- b. Dark backgrounds with light letters are historically appropriate and should be considered for sign colors. Dark colors are also appropriate since they complement the dark red colors of masonry in the downtown area.

**#23) TRADITIONAL LETTERING IS RECOMMENDED**

**Recommended**

- a. Letters should not exceed 18 inches in height.
- b. Serif style letters are appropriate and their use should be encouraged.
- c. No more than 60% of a sign's total area should be occupied by lettering.

The sign does utilize a dark ground, but the logo of the business is incorporated into the sign lettering, which alternates in bright red and stark white. Although the sign does only contain three colors, the alternating color scheme for the lettering is not traditional, nor is the utilization of a logo in place of a letter. Also, it is clear that more than 60% of the sign's total area is occupied by lettering. This busy sign scheme is not traditional and is in fact, distracting and not in keeping with other signage for buildings in the district.

### **III. STAFF RECOMMENDATION**

The proposed project does not meet the requirements set forth in the design review guidelines. Staff recommends denial of this request.

### **IV. DRAFT MOTION**

I move that the Sumter Historic Preservation Design Review Committee approve HP-10-06, in accordance with the materials, photographs, and construction details submitted and referenced in the Staff Report.

I move that the Sumter Historic Preservation Design Review Committee deny HP-10-06.

I move that the Sumter Historic Preservation Design Review Committee enter an alternative motion.

### **IV. HISTORIC PRESERVATION DESIGN REVIEW – March 25, 2010**

The Sumter Historic Preservation Design Review Committee at its meeting on Thursday, March 25, 2010, voted to table the following request. The board directed the applicant to work with staff to come up with a sign that would conform to the Ordinance requirements, and to bring this sign back to the board for review. The motion was seconded by Mr. James Lawler and carried a unanimous vote.